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ABSTRACT

American higher education developed under conditions vastly different from those of the Continent and Britain. Nine colleges were established in the colonial period before the Revolutionary War. Although some of them were related to state governments in their early history, they were even then importantly independent in comparison to continental institutions. The university came late to America, long after Bologna and Paris and Oxford had experienced centuries of development, decline, and renewal. Both American public and private universities married the German model of specialized research and advanced training to the older English-American model of liberal education by augmenting undergraduate colleges with graduate and professional schools. Along with the private college, the private university, and the state university, other types of institutions emerged, such as the separate teachers' colleges, public comprehensive colleges, technological colleges, art schools, and the two-year college. Complex and contradictory trends have evolved in academic government in recent years, and no simple picture can be drawn that typifies the whole country. The organizational evolution of the American system of higher education as a whole is simultaneously unilinear and multilinear. The unilinear evolution is toward ever larger systems, and the multilinear toward greater diversity within systems. (Author/MSE)

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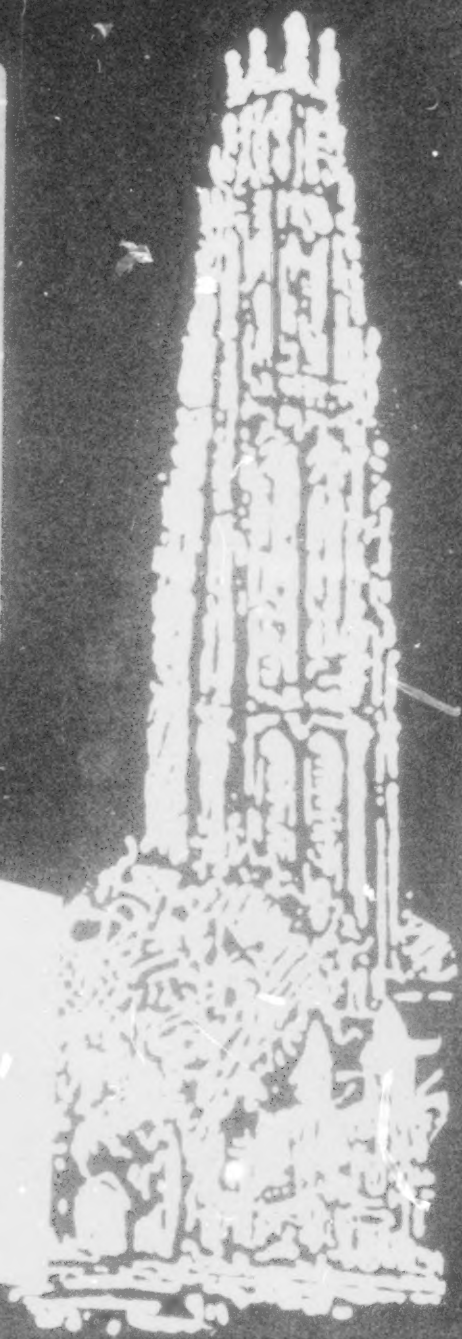

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THE STRUCTURE OF ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE IN THE UNITED STATES

by

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UNITED STATES

by Burton R. Clark

American higher education developed under conditions vastly different from those of the Continent and Britain. Beginning with Harvard (1636), William and Mary (1693), and Yale (1701), the early institutions were established in a sparsely populated colonial territory devoid of old cities, medieval heritage, and substantial resources. They were tiny colleges, not universities, originating a form known today as the liberal arts college. Their form came from England, where clusters of colleges composed Oxford and Cambridge, but the distinctive American pattern was to become the single college operating in isolation. The colleges were started by religious groups--Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists--as chartered corporations, a form also borrowed from the home country, and were placed under the control of "laymen," managers who were drawn from outside academic life and from outside governmental authority but from within the founding group.[1] The control device thereby established was the board of trustees, a form that

was later used even in public institutions, where the trustees were to represent "the public interest." The trustees hired a president and a few tutors to compose a small faculty. Organization therefore came about from the top down, with the parental external group establishing a superior body—the board of trustees--that, having all powers, then delegated authority as it pleased to the president and the faculty. Composed of local notables, the controlling board was physically as well as psychologically close to the college, able and usually willing to shape the decisions of those they hired and to check their behavior for deviation. This pattern of sponsorship by local religious interests and institutional control by laymen was the converse of the original European forms of organization, where faculty (and sometimes students) banded together in guilds, attempted to govern themselves through collegial principles, and maneuvered as best they could against the somewhat removed officials of state and church who claimed wide authority.

Nine colleges were established in the colonial period, before the Revolutionary War.[2] Although some of them were related to state governments in their early history, they

were even then importantly independent in comparison to Continental institutions that were under ministries of education and to later American public institutions that were directly financed by the individual states. The great impetus in the founding of such colleges came during the first half of the nineteenth century. As the population moved westward, small communities and religious groups spawned colleges in a chaotic fashion across the landscape, particularly in the western reaches of the eastern and southern states and in the new territories that now make up the Midwest and the Border States. During this period the small college, isolated in the countryside or in a small town, became institutionalized as the American model of voluntary support of higher education. Any group or sect could try its hand. Good intentions and high hopes, however, easily outran the resources available to many founding groups, and thus the growing cohort of scattered small colleges experienced a high death rate as well as a high birth rate. Of the more than 500 colleges chartered by the individual states between 1800 and 1860, only about one-fourth survived.[3] But in this Darwinian struggle, the

form was gradually strengthened. It took 150 to 200 years, between 1650 and 1800-1850, to develop effectively the control mechanism of a private board that managed the endowment, property, and affairs of an institution, possessing the legal status of a charitable trust.[4] As commerce and industry produced considerable private wealth in the last half of the nineteenth century, the colleges were able to turn more fully to support from individuals and families in the form of both permanent endowment gifts and annual contributions—support that, together with tuition fees paid by students, provided a private financial base. Businessmen also replaced ministers on many of the boards of trustees, attenuating the influence of churches at the same time that the colleges were shedding any lingering connections with state officials. By 1900, the crowd of small private colleges had grown to nearly nine hundred, located in all parts of the country, with heaviest concentration in New England, the Middle Atlantic States, and the Midwest, and the lightest on the West Coast, where the drive for public higher education was strong from the beginning.

The university came late to America, long after Bologna and Paris and Oxford had experienced centuries of development,

decline, and renewal. The first university to be established as such, Johns Hopkins, dates only from 1876. Other institutions were slowly evolving from college to university throughout the nineteenth century, with Yale developing graduate work in the 1850s and awarding the first American Ph.D. in 1861, and Harvard establishing a graduate department in the 1870s.[5] Other private colleges--Princeton, Columbia, Brown, and Cornell--soon followed, making up a sector of prestigious private universities that, joined by Chicago and Stanford in the 1890s, was well in place by the turn of the century. During this period, presidential leadership came into its own, beginning with the reign of Charles W. Eliot at Harvard (1869-1909) and including the entrepreneurship of Daniel Coit Gilman at Johns Hopkins, William Rainey Harper at Chicago, and David S. Jordan at Stanford.[6] These were models of the captain of erudition, the swashbuckling leader who vigorously solicited money, recruited faculty, assembled an administrative staff, and proclaimed the greatness of his own institution. The competitive dynamism of the American "system"--already endemic among the colleges--took a leap forward when the autonomous universities,

influenced by the German emphasis on research, set out to become great research universities.

At the same time, a sector of public universities was also emerging. The first universities supported by the governments of the individual states dated from before 1800, but it was after the Civil War and more toward the end of the century that they developed full form and strength, in part due to the resources provided the states by the federal government through the famous land-grant legislation of the Morrill Act. Developing major strength first in the Midwest and later in California, the state universities spoke of serving the sons and daughters of the average man, the farmer and the mechanic, assuming populist overtones that contrasted with the elitist qualities of the private universities concentrated in the eastern part of the country.[7] They were precursors of the modern open-door philosophy. Linked to popular support, they admitted high school graduates on a relatively unselective basis and oriented the undergraduate part of the institution to consumer demands and manpower needs of the home state. Like the comprehensive secondary school, they emphasized comprehensive purpose and

tended to promise something for everyone. They entered freely into such areas as agriculture, forestry, engineering--and later "home economics" for the girls whose jobs would be in the home.

But, like their private counterparts, the American public universities married the German model of specialized research and advanced training to the older English-American model of liberal education by augmenting undergraduate colleges with graduate and professional schools. The higher tier had selective enrollment, provided advanced training, and, particularly in the graduate school, centered on research. The graduate school became the home of the research scholar, and its standards reflected the interests of prestigious cosmopolitan members of the faculty. The state universities thus developed a hybrid character, linking a wide range of vocational fields to the natural sciences, social sciences, and the humanities, with a structure that had to face in fundamentally different directions. Thus, the University of Michigan, for example, might obtain its support from the state legislature primarily on the basis of what it did for the students of the state at the undergraduate level, but

it developed national and international standing on the basis of attractive conditions at the graduate level for research-minded faculty and students. And here, even more than in the private universities, a separate administrative staff was assembled for the purposes of development and coordination, headed by a president whose powers were delegated by a board of trustees.[8]

Along with the private college, the private university, and the state university, other types of institutions emerged. Before 1900, a separate set of public colleges for teacher training had developed. First known as normal schools, and closely associated with the school structures of the individual states, they gave a few years of training to prospective elementary school teachers. In the early decades of the twentieth century, thses schools changed their names to teachers colleges as they gained the right to give the bachelor's degree and undertook the preparation of teachers and administrators for secondary schools. Between the two world wars, many began to evolve beyond teacher training into their current form of public comprehensive colleges whose undergraduate scope is virtually as wide as that of the university, with fewer of the esoteric scholarly

specialties but more of the occupational ones. These "state colleges," many of which acquired the title of "state college university" or simply "state university," have grown rapidly since World War II, operating with a low-to-moderate degree of selectivity at a time when the established public universities have become more selective.

Still other sectors developed, among them the public and private engineering (or technological) colleges and universities, headed in a prestige hierarchy by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT, founded in 1861) and the California Institute of Technology (Cal Tech, 1891). Because the right to sponsor institutions has been so dispersed, among private as well as public hands, many kinds of "miscellaneous" postsecondary institutions have emerged, creating a bewildering array of proprietary, nonprofit, and specialized schools and colleges. By 1960, official statistics counted about three hundred assorted theological schools, art schools, and detached professional schools that were giving courses toward a bachelor's or higher degree. In addition, as a purely twentieth-century phenomenon, a genuine "short-cycle" unit emerged in the form of the junior college, which slowly

developed a niche in the educational structure. Limiting itself to the first two years beyond the secondary school, the junior college has provided both terminal programs of one- and two-years' duration and courses that parallel the regular first two collegiate years and allow transfer to four-year bachelor's programs at other colleges. Two-year colleges have been under private auspices as well as public control, but the public sector became the main site of their development as the community college concept took hold. With the first several public institutions appearing before 1910, the "junior college movement" developed momentum in the 1920s and the 1930s, particularly in California, establishing an organizational base for rapid proliferation and expansion in the era of mass higher education following World War II. Swelling to a thousand institutions by the early 1970s, this sector became preeminently the open-door part of American higher education, a filter that allowed other sectors to become more selective while the "system" as a whole became less selective.

The private sector, which has been gradually giving way numerically to the public sector and now has only one student in four, remains enormously varied when seen in cross-national

perspective. The private university has had at least three important subtypes: the research-centered university, highest in prestige and national in orientation--for example, Chicago, Columbia, and Yale; the secular urban-service university, lower in prestige and more local in orientation--for example, Boston University, New York University, George Washington University, and the University of Cincinnati; and the Catholic municipal university, usually standing well down the prestige hierarchy and oriented both to locality and Catholicism--for example, the University of Portland, University of Dayton, Seton Hall University, and St. John's University. The private college has shown equally great variation in quality and commitment among its eight hundred members: the secular elite liberal arts college, able to compete with the top universities, for example, Swarthmore, Reed, and Amherst; the middle-rank institution that usually maintains a modest religious connection, for example, St. Olaf, Baldwin-Wallace, and Westminster; and the rear-guard places struggling to gain or retain marginal accreditation and sometimes still completely dominated by a denominational board or an autocratic president, for example, Oral Roberts, Rio Grande, and Bob Jones. The institutions found at the tail

end of the academic procession, inferior to the best high schools, are "colleges only by grace of semantic generosity."[9]

Similarly in each type of public institution--university, state college, community college--dispersed public control has produced a great range in the mixture of purpose, program, and academic quality. The University of Mississippi qualitatively differs from Berkeley; Western Kentucky University differs extensively from Brooklyn College or San Francisco State University; and suburban Foothill Community College (Los Altos, California) is an academic showpiece differing radically from Chicago Loop College and Los Angeles City College--downtown community colleges that, within a huge scale of operations (more than 20,000 students), have large numbers of poor students from minority backgrounds and dozens of one- and two-year terminal programs along with academic courses that permit transfer to four-year institutions.

The development of so much variance among and within the major sectors had led long before World War II to an unparalleled national diversity. This primary characteristic of American higher education has interacted with a second: marked competition among institutions in the search for financial resources, personnel, and clientele. Not only

did the privately controlled institutions compete with one another but also with the public campuses. That such competition became a habit is indicated by the way public institutions took to rivaling one another, explicitly and sharply, even within the same state system: for example, Michigan State University versus the University of Michigan, the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) versus Berkeley in California, Southern Illinois University versus the University of Illinois.

A third characteristic of "the system," especially remarkable when viewed in cross-national perspective, is the huge size of some major parts as well as the whole. After a quarter-century of rapid development of mass higher education following World War II, official statistics in 1970 showed more than 2,500 institutions and 8 million students. By the mid-1970s, New York State had moved rapidly into an immense state system of 64 institutions and 325,000 students; New York City operated a separate system of its own, with 11 institutions and 250,000 students. The total scale of operations for the entire state of New York was second only to the huge public system in California where the university has 9 campuses (122,000 enrollment), the state colleges numbered 19 (291,000 enrollment), and the community colleges numbered 103 (757,000

enrollment), with total enrollment for the state in excess of 1,372,000.[10]

Because of such enormous scale and extensive diversity, it is difficult to identify and describe modal patterns of control, especially in terms fitting for cross-national comparison. To establish a first approximation, we limit our observations to the university, and there primarily to the public sector, and work up the levels of organization common to the chapters of this volume.

LEVELS OF ORGANIZATION

At the lowest level of organization in the American university, the standard unit is the department. The reasons for the development of the department rather than the one-person chair have not been documented historically.[11] We can guess that the style of top-down organization, with its similarity to business structure and bureaucratic delegation of power to impersonal offices, probably accounts in large measure for the department form. The guild forms of older countries, which locate so much power at the bottom in the person of the master, the chairholding professor,

never obtained in the early colleges of the United States. In any event, by 1825 the department was in being at Harvard and by 1900 it was firmly in place throughout the nation's universities and colleges as the basic way to accommodate specialization and divide the ever larger structures.[12]

In comparison with the chair and its often-related institute, the department distributes power more widely: first, among a group of full professors; then, in reduced portion, to associate and assistant professors. The chairmanship of the department is an impersonal position in the sense that it commonly rotates on three-year term among the senior figures rather than remaining the fixed possession of one person. On some issues the incumbent must consult with other full professors and perhaps tenured associate professors; on others, the chairman must take up the matter with the entire teaching staff. In such meetings, majority vote has been the common device for decision making. Thus, the department has been first of all a collegial body, one that is relatively unitary around common interest in a discipline and mildly hierarchical in the vertical arrangement of the ranks of full professor, associate professor, and assistant professor (and sometimes instructor).

But the department is also a bureaucratic unit, the chairman being the lowest arm of general academic management. He is responsible to one or more deans and one or more campus-wide officials (president, academic vice-president, provost). To a much greater degree than the chair professor, the chairman is accountable "up" an organizational hierarchy as well as "down" to colleagues of equal or near-equal status. Often appointed by the administration after consultation with department members, the chairman serves at the pleasure of the central campus officials. Therefore, at the level where the personal rulership of the professor is strong in chair systems, bureaucratic and collegial authority are heavily intertwined in the American department system. On occasion the department can be highly particularistic, through personal dominance of a towering figure in its midst or through logrolling politics in the voting of a collective body. But the forces of particularism and personalism are damped by the lateral control within a collegial body and the department's vertical links to higher officials. Because there is dual authority, the collegial body and the bureaucratic staff also tend to watch one another, thus providing some check on the arbitrary exercise of power

within the department. The tensions of the system fall most heavily on the chairman, as the person in the middle, straddling the line between faculty and administration and assuming responsibility on an ambiguous foundation of authority.

The next level up in the American university structure is the college, or the school, for example, the College of Arts and Sciences or the School of Medicine, Law, or Business.[13] The College of Arts and Sciences commonly contains the basic disciplines, thus embracing all the departments of the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences. This central college also commonly has hegemony over undergraduate and graduate education--that is, everything other than the professional schools which, in the American scheme, now exist almost entirely at an advanced, graduate level, in contrast to the European system where the study of medicine and other professional fields begins immediately after the secondary level and is organized in faculties. The basic college, or closely related units, commonly has a dean for the undergraduate realm and another for the graduate. At most universities the staff of the departments teach at both levels and hence fall within both of these two major administrative jurisdictions. The college deans are usually

appointed by top officials of the university and, more than the department chairmen, operate as true members of the central administration. The deans of the professional schools, though somewhat more autonomous, are still appointed rather than elected for the most part and have the status of an administrative officer. Each deanship is an administrative office staffed with assistant deans and other supporting personnel, a base of administrative power independent of faculty bodies and above the constituent departments.

The college or school also has one or more collective bodies--for example the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the Faculty of the Undergraduate College, and the Faculty of the Graduate School--which meet occasionally, hear reports from their own committee and the deans, and decide by collective voting. There is thus a dual structure within which the administrative officials and the professorial bodies must work out ways of separating and joining jurisdictions. Typically, the administration controls the budget, the teaching staff supervises the curriculum, and both are involved in student conduct. There are many dual-membership committees, and there are professors who

develop administrative capacities and relations of mutual trust with certain administrators, thus serving as a bridging oligarchy. Notably, on most campuses, the broad academic collective bodies have little say in the crucial area of personnel. The hiring, promoting, and firing of teaching staff falls between the individual department, which does the basic personnel work and usually has primary influence in junior appointments, and the higher administrative officials and committees of professors appointed by the administration, who approve all appointments and exercise this power of approval (and funding of requisite positions) with great care in the case of expensive tenured personnel.

The complex intersecting of administrators and academics at this level of organization may be characterized as a bureaucraticized federation of collegial groups. As in the chair-based systems, where the counterpart unit is the faculty, the American college or school is a relatively flat structure since it contains a number of formally equal collegial bodies in the form of departments that may total fifty or more in the central college (Arts and Sciences) on large campuses. But it has also an administrative office that is hierarchically superior to the departments and is clearly a part of a large

administrative framework. Bureaucratic authority is here much stronger than in the traditional systems of the Continent. It systematically intrudes upon the power of the clusters and it encourages the application of common standards. The diffusion of overlapping power among faculty and administrative units also makes it difficult to exercise particularistic judgments.

At the third level of the university campus as a whole, the American structure has for some decades exhibited a complex blending of the authority of trustees, administrators, and professors. The laymen who serve on the board of trustees (or regents) that is formally at the apex of control are supposed to guide the long-term development of the institution in the name of broad interests of the larger society. In public universities, they are largely appointed by the governor of the state, with only a few states providing for popular election. Terms of appointment vary greatly among the states and the institutions themselves, ranging from such short terms as two to three years to very long ones of fourteen and sixteen years. The state governors, in uneven fashion, select trustees who are congenial to their own political point of view, or are wealthy, or have the capacity to

understand the management of large organizations, or are spokespersons for groups that need representation in order to balance the board. In comparison with faculties and students, trustees are politically conservative; but recent surveys (for example, Hartnett, 1970) suggest that they are not now so much concentrated in business and law as once seemed the case.[14] In private universities, they are generally elected by the existing trustees, occasionally by alumni, and hence have the character of self-perpetuating boards. Like such boards in other sectors of society, the members are part-time, meeting perhaps once a month, or as infrequently as three or four times a year, although some among them (the chairman and members of an executive committee) will meet more often and give much time to the institution. The trustees, as their most important function, appoint the administrative head, the president or chancellor, and officially delegate much to him, while retaining residual powers and ultimate legal control.

Of course, what is delegated has been determined broadly by the historical evolution of respective powers of the board and the administration. The long-run drift has been from close trustee supervision to management by professional

administration. Beginning with the reign of the strong institution-building presidents, formal administration increasingly came into its own at the campus-wide level of organization.[15] Here, unlike the Continental systems and chair-based systems around the world, a large class of administrators has developed who are neither of the faculty and controlled by it nor of a state ministry of education and directed by it. As experts in such specialties as student admission, record-keeping, personnel policy, physical plant management, library operations, budgeting, public relations, alumni affairs, and university planning, they compose an administrative structure within which they work for and at the pleasure of the president, the vice presidents, the treasurer, and the business office. Their specialized roles and training dispose them to points of view different from those of trustees, faculty, and students.[16] They are generally grouped together in a large administration building that physically reinforces mutual contact and interest.

At the same time, the academicians have some collective and representational bodies, such as an academic senate or a board of permanent officers, that operate across the campus and major segments of it. But the faculty grasp tends to

have a narrower scope than that of the administration and trustees; the professional-school bodies are usually split off from those of the central "liberal arts faculty" of the undergraduate college and the graduate school. All-university committees that embrace all the schools and colleges are commonly appointed by, and report to, the chief administrative officer.

The American structure at this level thus differs considerably from the other countries considered in this volume in the combination of (1) the presence of laymen as trustees, responsible for general policy and holding ultimate responsibility and power, and (2) the operation of a major administrative corps answerable to the trustees and holding delegated authority, jurisdiction, and responsibility. As at the levels beneath it, the all-campus structure is relatively flat and considerably federative, since the many departments, colleges, and schools retain impressive powers and degrees of influence in many sectors of decision making, particularly personnel and curriculum. But the structure also shows a clear hierarchy, with central administrators and trustees set above. As a result, day-to-day activity entails an intermingling of the forms of authority natural to the separate rule of professors,

bureaucrats, and trustees. Stripped to stark simplicity, the control structure of the American university is a federation of collegial groups that is bureaucratically ordered and supervised by laymen. Systematic, predictable, and dependable connections are not hard to find, but they take unusual shapes in blending two or three forms of authority or in establishing a division of labor among contradictory forms, and hence are not well conceptualized if they are lumped together as a "bureaucracy" or a "community" or even an "organized anarchy."[17]

Beyond the single campus, at wider administrative levels, the patterns of control become more divergent. The private university largely drops from view, since it is not formally a part of large webs of organization; its own trustees are the highest point of control. Outside supervision of the conduct of private institutions has indeed been light, taking largely the form of periodic evaluations by regional voluntary associations for general institutional "accreditation" and by professional associations for specific professional and scientific programs (discussed below), which pose little threat to institutions other than those of very low quality. The basic fact that the private institutions, in nearly all

states, have not been part of a superstructure remains a primary cause of the unusual leeway and necessity for institutions to compete with one another.

In the public sector, since World War II a set of arrangements has emerged at essentially the fourth level of our comparative schema. There are coordinating structures for sets of universities within multicampus state universities such as the University of California, which at one time was virtually synonymous with the Berkeley campus but has become a nine-campus system of institutions placed formally on a par with Berkeley, not under it. (In addition, sets of state colleges and community colleges also became, as nonuniversity sectors, more strongly organized as multicampus state systems.)[18] The controlling board of trustees moved up from the single-campus to the statewide level and a statewide university administration was created on top of the growing campus administration. The central administrative staff rapidly became an imposing force, allocating resources, controlling decisions of field officers (campus administrators) by establishing uniform categories and checking for compliance. Central multicampus administration has less need to answer downward to the teaching staff than does campus administration, and stronger need to answer upward

to the trustees. The administration and faculty of a campus are now finding common cause in the welfare of their own unit within the system, against the university-wide administrators who have a responsibility for the whole and a view from the top that is shared only with the trustees. With this elaboration of administrative superstructure, control has moved even further away from the dominant modes of chair systems, where the collegial control of professors has tended to dominate all levels up to that of state or national ministry of education. In the first level above the campus, professors have only minor roles: in general, the higher the level, the lower the participation of professors.

Because education in the United States was long ago made the responsibility of state rather than national government, Level 5 in our comparative scheme is a key level in the American structure. It has been to the state executive branch (the governor, budget and finance officers, and sometimes the department of education) and to the state legislature that the trustees and chief administrative officers of the universities and university systems must turn for support, a situation that has persisted despite the great increase in federal grants of the postwar period. American higher education

assumes a place as a segment of public administration in the form of a large set of subgovernments within the separate states. The degree of integration into state goverment has varied considerably among the states, given their different traditions, politics, and administrative structures. In some states, the government has exercised specific approval of narrow items in university budgets--faculty travel or the purchase of typewriters; in others, there is constitutional autonomy and lump-sum allocation that set higher education apart from all other governmental activities.

Also at this level, but apart from the regular offices of government, recent years have seen the rapid growth of superboards established for the purpose of coordinating all units of higher education importantly supported by the state, thus bringing state colleges, community colleges, and universities together in one loose administrative framework. In attempting to map this organizational territory, recent research has pointed to four types of situations that vary in degree of central control and in proportion of members drawn from the public compared to members drawn from the institutions. The first type, no state coordinating board at all, was found in as many as seventeen states as late as 1959 but in only two

states a decade later. The second type, a board voluntarily organized by member organizations, also decreased in the same period from seven states to two. The third type, a formal coordinating board, spread from ten to twenty-seven states; and the fourth and most rigorous type, a "consolidated governing board," increased from sixteen to nineteen in number.[19] Thus, the shift was clearly to the third type, which is essentially a formally mandated superboard placed over the existing boards of trustees that top the institutional sectors at our fourth level of organization. And within that type, a big shift has taken place from boards that largely have institutional representatives and hold only nominal coordinating influence to boards that either have a public majority and advisory powers (eleven states), or boards that have a public majority and regulatory powers (fourteen states).[20] In these high councils, professors have virtually no role: "Faculty representation at the level of the 'superboard' is likely to be minimal or nonexistent."[21] Groups of professors may make occasional presentations, but they must turn to the officialdom of their own professional associations and, increasingly, to their own unions to influence state-level control.

Another aspect of the state and regional level of academic organization is the special role of nongovernmental associations in accreditation, the awarding of legitimacy to institutions and to the degrees they confer. The six voluntary associations that judge whole institutions are regional; for example, the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools and the New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.[22] Supported by annual fees paid by the member institutions of the region, each association has its own headquarters and small administrative staff. The associations draw on professors from within their own area, and sometimes from the outside, to compose the ad hoc committees that visit, evaluate, and report on various institutions on, commonly, a five-year cycle. Their operation permits a mild degree of professorial supervision. And the occasion of the accreditation visit calls always for the administration and faculty to assess their institution's weaknesses and strengths in a report prepared for the visitors. But, as suggested earlier for private colleges, the accrediting association is an important pressure only on institutions that hover around a low threshold of quality—or, occasionally, an experimental college whose new ways deeply offend established academic

canons.[23] Notably, these associations do not attempt to administer institutional equality: in no important way do they serve as a private counterpart to the European ministry of education that, as in Italy and France, attempts to equate the work at various institutions within the framework of state-certified national degrees. Nor are they equivalent to the English system of external examiners with its institutionalized commitment to the uniform maintenance of high standards. The associations arose in the American context of dispersed control as a device for ensuring some minimal competence. They do not attempt to stop established institutions from doing largely as they please. They recognize that there is considerable inequality among institutions and they do little to discourage diversity and institutional competition in a market of detached units.

As for Level 6, until recently American higher education was without any formal national organization. There was no ministry of education, no structure that reached from Washington, D.C., to embrace universities, nor any standing committees, councils, or commissions to play an important voluntary coordinating role. As late as the 1950s, the national Office of Education gathered statistics and

administered a few categorical aid programs such as vocational education for the public schools, but it dared not disturb state superintendents of public instruction much less presidents of universities. Leaving aside special wartime efforts centered on scientific research, the nearest thing to systematic federal intervention was the "GI Bill," which gave financial support to veterans of World War II and later wars, administered by the Veterans Administration. In the 1950s, the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health began to influence scientific research and teaching in the universities, in patterns of voluntary rather than mandatory linkage. Gradually, however, professional schools of medicine and scientific departments at some universities have become heavily dependent on national funds, essentially evolving into federal-grant units within the universities, state and private.[24] The Office of Education also became a major enterprise in the 1960s, administering major grants for higher education as well as for elementary and secondary schools.

Federal funds have come to universities and colleges in several forms. One form is student-centered funding, whereby the government makes grants and loans to individuals

who in turn can "purchase" their education anywhere they want, including private institutions. This form plays heavily on the market features of American higher education, relying on consumer choice as the invisible hand that will guide the development of a system. A second form is institution-centered, whereby funds flow directly from the government to the institution. As in national systems in other countries, such funds vary from categorical allotment for specific programs to lump sums for general institutional support. A third form is discipline-centered, whereby research and sometimes teaching funds flow to specific departments and professors as research grants or awards for improvement of teaching and training.

An increasing amount of indirect manipulation by various bureaus and central councils of the national government has resulted from national funding. The early 1970s saw the emergence of direct influence when the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare together with the Department of Labor decided on the withdrawal of all federal funds from institutions as a sanction against those who failed to present an effective plan of affirmative action for the employment of women and minorities. Other such direct

interventions are under consideration: for example, in the name of national medical manpower policy, medical schools may be required to set targets and quotas for training certain types of doctors as a condition for the continuation of federal funding.

Yet, American universities do not think of themselves as part of a nationally administered system. In comparative perspective, they are not. The basic institutionalized lines of influence that are found at the national level in Italy, France, and even Britain remain strongest in the United States at the level of the fifty states. Although the federal lines are growing in importance, they remain uneven and secondary. Moreover, some federal policies are designed to enhance control of the individual states: A national law enacted in 1972 required all states to have some type of planning group ("1202 Commissions," named after the number of the law) for all public higher education, thus backing superboard influence at the state level.

In formal organization, the United States has at best a quasi-system of largely indirect influences at the broadest level of control and coordination. Compared to the situation that existed before World War II, there is now much more of

a system; but compared to what obtains nationally in most countries today, there is not much of a system. The private sector, headed by such universities as Chicago, Columbia, Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, and Yale, remains independent and strong. And the public sector is still essentially composed of the fifty states within which individual public universities and colleges control personnel selection and compete with one another, as well as with the private places, for students and faculty. Therefore, among the major advanced systems of the world, the American remains the most unorganized and approximates a market of freely interacting competitive units.[25] It remains the most influenced by the unorganized decision making that can be seen as "social-choice," at the opposite end of the continuum from unitary bureaucracy.[26] The historic trend is clearly toward administered order, with some coordination provided by voluntary associations of administrators and professors headquartered in Washington, D.C., as well as by the increasing influence of a number of federal agencies.[27] But market conditions remain the basic element. The national level of control exhibits little structure and fragmented influence over a congeries of universities that vary greatly

in purpose and ethos as well as in size and resources. Fragmentation remains strong relative to the forces of system building.

To summarize the nature of academic control across the whole of the six levels in the United States: The national center possesses relatively little formal authority; the middle levels (state, multicampus, and university-wide) are strongly organized, with trustee and administrative authority predominating over faculty prerogatives; and the lower levels (college and department) retain impressive decision making powers over personnel and curriculum--areas in which professors care most about exercising collegial rule. The various levels and the several major forms of authority constitute a set of countervailing forces. In organization and authority, the "system" is not only inordinately large and complex but also fundamentally disorderly.

The interests of students remain only weakly voiced at any level in formal councils, despite the great attention paid in the 1960s to student protest and student participation in governance. It remains true in the United States that students vote mainly with their feet, exercising considerable choice of place to attend as well as field of study. In such a system,

consumer demand plays a large role compared to manpower planning. The consumers have had leverage that the planners do not: They not only can choose what unit to enter but also can make the "exit" decision, moving from one institution to another.[28] Because there is so much initial choice and later exiting and transferring, the viability of many individual colleges and universities depends on either adaptive response to clientele or the establishment of a claim of unique performance. Since distinctiveness lays claim to clients in a way that sameness does not, many institutions have thus attempted to develop a special character instead of passively accepting a uniform role.[29]

CHANGE

When we compare the distribution of authority in the American system with that of Continental systems, we see that powers usually elsewhere found at the top are located at the middle levels in U.S. institutions. In other systems provincial and national ministries of education have been in charge of the administrative services involved in making appointments, paying salaries, running the physical plant, and

supporting students. Until recently little administration was considered necessary immediately above the domains of the professors. In any case, their strong guild organization did not permit it. As a consequence weak administrative structure at the university level became characteristic. But in the United States the historic tradition of institutional autonomy demanded that the university itself handle overhead services. The required government and administration became fixed in trustee and administrative authority that was separate from and above the domains of the professors. As administration became located on campus, the emerging class of university officials developed a vested interest in keeping it there, fighting against a shift that would move jurisdiction to the staff of state bureaus.

The forces for change in the 1960s and early 1970s affected this complicated control structure in a number of ways. Growth has led to an increase in unit size at all levels, deepening the need for coordination both within and between the units, and thereby favoring the development of more and larger administrative groups. Campus-wide administration (Level 3) has grown measurably and has become increasingly professionalized, tending toward the use of scientific management techniques to

improve central assessment and effective intervention. Administrative systems have also grown larger and stronger at the level of state government (Level 5); and new kinds of administrative systems have developed at a level between the university and the state in the form of multicampus university systems (Level 4). A major trend is thus that of the ascendance of administration at these three levels. So important have administrators become that they overwhelmingly make up the membership of commissions--private or public, national or state--that advise on educational policy, in contrast to European commissions that contain prestigious professors. The growth of "federal intervention," itself important, remains a minor phenomenon compared to that of the growth of administrative strength at the university-to-statehouse levels of the American system. Within these levels, the tilt has been definitely upward, toward a centralization of authority and administration.

These three levels have come under greater public scrutiny and political pressure in recent years. The student discontent of the 1960s caused a wide range of specific publics to watch university affairs more closely, a rise in concern that was also propelled by escalating costs, growing

interest in access, and the greater visibility of a larger enterprise. Even without the organized student actions, increased interest would have brought more political attention in its wake. But hostile public reaction to radical tactics on campus ensured intervention by external political groups at the levels that are primarily controlled by system administrators, boards of trustees, and state officials. A second major outcome of growth therefore has been an increasing entanglement of administration with the politics of the general political arena.

However, these administrative levels are but the top of a gigantic academic iceberg whose drift is by no means determined solely by administration at suprauniversity levels and external political forces. The work of teaching and research is still done in the department and in such auxiliary units as the research institute and interdisciplinary programs. Policy directly relevant to the basic work is decided largely at the second level of college and school. At these levels, collegial control remains strong, challenged mainly by bureaucratic authority of the campus administration. The understructure is thick and tough and resistant to externally imposed change. And political groups, to their

constant frustration, are usually unable to penetrate to these levels. The governor of a state, as in California, may fume about the little time that the faculty devotes to teaching in the state university, but the faculty goes on finding ways to save time for research, often shielded by campus administrators interested in attracting and holding faculty talent.

Put broadly, the growth in knowledge and in the demand for experts that has been characteristic of recent decades has reinforced the strength of the disciplines inside the organizational mass of the systems that have been made ever larger. Increased specialization in scientific and other academic fields, as well as in the upper reaches of the general labor force, strenthens the influence of those whose authority is rooted in expertise.[30] Administrators in the 1970s are less, rather than more, qualified to pass judgment in the many specialized academic sectors and hence must depend heavily on judgment by professorial peers. In the face of the elaboration of administrative superstructure, the levels of department and college remain grounded in various forms of personal and collegial rulership. Thus, there has been a strengthening of the disciplines that

crosscut institutions and that comprise a national system of higher education along lines of occupational specialty. Because of this increased strength of the diverse clusters of experts, organizational structure is pressed toward greater differentiation and decentralized decision making.

In a national system of institutions that is so large and internally diverse, however, major segments may move in quite different directions. In the segments where faculty influence has been weak, the growth in organizational scale has exacerbated faulty feelings of powerlessness. And instructors in those segments, preeminently the community colleges and the state colleges, concentrate so much on teaching that they do not receive the rewards of research. With these conditions, the 1970-75 recession in American higher education, raising employment and job security to crucial issues, has sparked a major leap forward in faculty unionization. Union hierarchies are now added to the organizational web of higher education, replacing disciplinary associations in first importance for many academics, while professors who do research, have national visibility, and can bargain for themselves will have less need for union protection. Seniority status through union membership may

even replace tenure in those places where trustees and administrators wish to diminish tenure guarantees and have the power to do so.

Despite these trends, the market conditions under which institutions have traditionally operated still prevail. Private colleges and universities still make their way by individually raising funds, recruiting faculty, and attracting students. Public institutions, although they are within administered systems and are more accountable to higher bodies, still have to face the competition generated by more than 2,500 institutions operating under dispersed control. Strengthened state coordination has not eliminated the market. The growing power of administrative staffs during the 1960s was congruent with enhanced, even flamboyant, competition in the affluent higher education economy of those years: The nouveau riche among the state systems--Texas, Florida, and Arizona--eagerly sought to buy and stock faculty talent on newly built or greatly expanded campuses; developing campuses in the New York state system such as Stony Brook and Buffalo tried to lure professors from Michigan and UCLA, Princeton and Chicago. The financial turndown of the early 1970s has reduced the competitive

zeal, but the basic structure and established custom of the national system continue to promote a level of competition different in kind from that in the other countries examined in this volume.

With such complex and contradictory trends in academic government, no simple picture can be drawn that typifies the whole country. Some observers have predicted homogenization under greater control by the state.[31] But any trend in that direction is slight when seen in a cross-national perspective, and it may actually be to the contrary, toward greater diversity. The combination of huge size and decentralization seems to be bringing about an increased number of modal patterns for the distribution of power. An enlarged division of labor in matters of academic control also makes possible the simultaneous growth of divergent forms of authority. In the American set of universities the professional authority of faculty has increased at the lower levels, the bureaucratic authority of administrators has increased at the middle levels, and the public authority of trustees and other laymen has increased at state and national levels.

Thus, the organizational evolution of the American

university system, and American higher education as a whole, is simultaneously unilinear and multilinear.[32] The unilinear evolution is toward ever larger systems, offering more power to high public officials and senior administrators and calling for the attention of planners. The multilinear movement is toward greater diversity within systems, a looseness within which various professorial (professional) interests are vested in group control over slices of the educational domain. Academic control in America is part of the broader modern problem of how general policy-makers, administrators, and professional experts will all be able to express and combine their legitimate interests in systems of ever growing complexity.

NOTES

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